

HURRICAN SANDY: ONE YEAR
LATER

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2013

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise as we recognize the anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, which made landfall in New Jersey one year ago today.

By now, we all know that Sandy was a storm of epic proportions. In New Jersey, 357,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, and 2.7 million households were left without power—some for weeks.

We pause to remember the over 3 dozen New Jerseyans tragically killed by the storm. It is only thanks to the heroic efforts of our first responders that many more were saved from the rising waters.

As media coverage focused on the destruction to shore communities, inland towns along the Hackensack River in Northern New Jersey were also being inundated by floodwaters.

The towns of Little Ferry and Moonachie in Bergen County were particularly hard hit. About 90 percent of the homes there were damaged or destroyed.

Over \$19.6 million in Individual Assistance from FEMA has been awarded in my district, including \$9.3 million in Little Ferry and \$6.2 million in Moonachie—two working class towns with a combined population of just over 13,000.

We have come far over the past year, but we still have a long way to go moving forward.

Moonachie's Borough Hall, which houses the municipal government and public safety department, is still operating out of temporary trailers.

In Little Ferry, many homeowners were only recently informed that after spending thousands on repairs, the extent of the damage was severe enough that their homes would

have to be elevated—weeks after grant programs to help fund the elevations had closed their applications.

Unfortunately, the State of New Jersey has been slow to spend its initial allocation of HUD funding provided under the Sandy supplemental appropriations legislation. According to some estimates, just 25 percent of the funding allocated for housing programs has gone out the door to those in need.

With the next round of Community Development Block Grant—Disaster Recovery funding on the way for the regions impacted, I will be fighting to ensure that these critical aid dollars go towards addressing our outstanding needs and priorities quickly and efficiently.

Sandy taught us how utterly vulnerable we are when disaster strikes—a lesson we cannot soon forget.

As we continue to rebuild for the long term, we need to focus on finding solutions which will make our communities more resilient to better protect us from future storms.

We must also work towards reducing our carbon emissions in order to slow the warming of our climate, which is driving stronger storms, sea level rise, and more severe weather.

As we move into the second year of our recovery efforts, I urge my colleagues to stay firm in their resolve to support us in the work we still have ahead of us.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL WORK AND FAMILY MONTH

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2013

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Work and Family Month. As a father of five, I understand the constant struggle faced by American families to balance

their work and family life. Policies that promote work-life balance can, and have, helped to create healthier, more flexible work environments.

Today's families are increasingly likely to include two working parents. In addition to caring for children, a number of working-age adults face other demands on their time such as caring for an aging parent. To meet the needs of a modern workforce, many companies have created work-life programs to assist employees in balancing their jobs with their personal commitments.

Studies show that both employees and employers benefit from work-life flexibility programs. Benefits from such programs include increased productivity, recruitment, retention, and employee satisfaction. Work-life initiatives lead to better business, higher employee morale, and healthier families.

In today's economy, public and private employers, including our government, are finding it is not only necessary, but beneficial to support work-life balance. With this in mind, I have introduced the 'Paid Vacation Act' (H.R. 2096) to provide workers one week of paid leave annually under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). My bill would provide much needed time off to the one in four Americans, working in the private sector, who do not receive any paid vacation.

Today's employees work longer and harder than ever before. I strongly support policies, like paid vacation leave and sick leave, that allow workers to spend more time with their families, improve their mental and physical health, and ultimately be more productive. We in Congress must take National Work and Family Month as an opportunity to consider how to better promote work-life programs and policies that will benefit working families.

This October, in honor of National Work and Family Month, I encourage my colleagues to acknowledge the positive impacts of a healthy work-life balance on family life and the workforce.